THE PRAIRIE PROMOTER

Grassroots Conservation in Action

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The Prairie Enthusiasts

TPE Volunteers Receive Awards

Ron Endres (top, photo by Dennis Connor) and Zach Kastern (bottom, photo by Jerry Newman)

Awards for "Conservationist of the Year" and "Volunteer Steward of the Year" were handed out this fall to two of our own.

Ron Endres from the Empire-Sauk Chapter received 2016 Conservationist of the Year from Gathering Waters Conservancy at a ceremony Nov. 2 at the Friends of Wisdom Prairie Dinner Lecture in Middleton.

Zach Kastern from the Glacial Prairie Chapter was honored by the WI Department of Natural Resources with the Volunteer of the Year prize Sept. 17 at the DNR's annual picnic at Wisconsin River State Natural Area.

Ron's nomination to Gathering Waters was initiated by TPE member Carla Wright. In his supporting letter, member Dennis Connor said Ron was a "stalwart conservation leader and a dedicated, persistent and generous soldier in the pursuit of conserving our declining environmental heritage."

For numerous years, Ron has been active as a volunteer with several land conservation organizations, including Ice Age Trail, The Prairie Enthusiasts, Wisdom Prairie and Dane County Parks. Not only does he selflessly give his time and resources to the land – especially prairies and savannas – Ron also shares his learnings. For example, Ron has worked tirelessly to collect, process and give away the very heart of natural area restoration - native plant seed.

On his own, Ron commutes to local and distant sites where particular species of plants are known to prosper, and at the appropriate time, collects the seed. He then harvests, dries and processes the seeds into what is considered

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Our Mission

The Prairie Enthusiasts seek to ensure the perpetuation and recovery of prairie, oak savanna, and other associated ecosystems of the Upper Midwest through protection, management, restoration, and education. In doing so, we strive to work openly and cooperatively with private landowners and other private and public conservation groups.

Listening out on the prairie

Chris Kirkpatrick, Executive Director

Earlier this year, TPE adopted a three-year Strategic Plan, which gives the Board & Staff direction and guidance for the future. The number one priority continues to be finding ways for the organization to increase support for each chapter. To better understand needs, new board president Scott Fulton and I began visiting each chapter this summer, and listening to its core leaders.

When we are done, we want to know how TPE's 11 chapters function, how they see themselves in the future, and what they see as priorities. So far, Scott and I have met with more than half the chapters, and these visits have started to paint a picture of who we are as an organization, and where we would like to go in the future.

We are hearing that, regardless of size or focus of the chapter, everyone wants more active volunteers, more members engaged with chapter leaders, and better ways to communicate with members and the public. Some chapters want more land protection projects; others desire outreach to the community and schools. Some want help teaching prescribed fire techniques to develop more experienced and trained burn bosses. All the input is extremely important for us to hear, and to share with chapter leaders and members.

Scott and I are inspired by the conversations, and we feel renewed enthusiasm from local chapter leaders. By talking about short- and long-term goals, while celebrating the amazing things we are doing right, it helps us all see what we could accomplish together. It's this sharing of passion and vision that brings us together, and it's what allows us to grow, stretch and become a stronger organization.

This is true prairie enthusiasm, and we want everyone to be a part of the shared future vision.

Scott and I will continue these visits and look forward to hearing from many more of you by the end of the year. If you would like to share your thoughts, please contact me. I can be reached at TPE's office in Viroqua by phone at (608) 638-1873, or email *executivedirector@ThePrairieEnthusiasts.org.*

Annual Photo Contest

A major highlight of every TPE annual conference is the Photo Contest. Photos can be submitted by anyone of anything related to prairies and savannas. The finalists will be selected by the conference host chapter (Northwest Illinois for the upcoming conference - see insert in this issue), and the winners are determined by a vote of the conference participants. All finalists receive the framed print of their photo used at the conference, and the winning photograph will be used on the cover of our next annual report.

Please send your photo files by email before February 1, 2017 to Joe Rising at *tpe@The PrairieEnthusiasts.org*. Please contact Joe at (608) 638-1873 with any questions.

Photo Credits - Jim Schultz (front page), Dennis Graham (back page)

President's Message

Scott Fulton, President

At the annual meeting in July, I was honored to be elected President of The Prairie Enthusiasts.

My predecessor, Jack Kussmaul, left quite a legacy behind. Under his leadership, TPE grew dramatically in membership, staff, capability and acres of land under our protection. Perhaps most importantly, Jack put TPE on the path to accreditation as a land trust, a challenging undertaking that we are on track to complete in the next two years. This work is building a solid foundation for even more growth in the future. Luckily for all of us, Jack will remain very active with TPE in his formal roles as ex-President and chair of the Fundraising and Accreditation Committees. On behalf of everyone, I extend my sincerest thanks to Jack for his outstanding service to us all.

My own first order of business is to get to know all of our chapters much better and to begin building deeper personal relationships with the many individuals who contribute so much on the ground effort and support across the organization. As mentioned in his message in this issue on Page 2, executive director Chris Kirkpatrick and I have started a process of meeting with leaders and key members of all 11 TPE chapters. I have spent many wonderful hours so far driving back and forth across the Driftless Area on this mission and have been impressed by the deep commitment so many show for what we do together. I continue to be amazed at the remarkable diversity among TPE's chapters.

Another major focus is to develop a new organization-wide Communications, Outreach and Education Committee. Over the last year, TPE has added significant new resources in this area, including the new color *Prairie Promoter*, a completely rebuilt website, an eNews service and larger Facebook presence. Chapters are also stepping up their own efforts, with quite a few new initiatives under way. The overall goals of the committee will be to support the staff and chapters in these activities and to provide policies and oversight where required. I personally believe very strongly that communications, outreach and education are not only tools that we use to build our membership and raise funds, but are also a critical part of our very mission as an organization. This committee will be open to any TPE member who would like to help, so please let me know if you are interested in participating or have ideas in this area. Contact me at *president@ThePrairieEnthusiasts.org*.

The local chapter/regional organization structure we have is highly unusual among both land trusts and conservation organizations in general. This makes for some daunting challenges for those of us who take on leadership roles. However, I believe a great deal of value to the world is being created by our unique federation of passionate, knowledgeable and local *human* communities focused on learning about and protecting, restoring and managing the *natural* communities we love. I am looking forward to working with all of you as we continue to build a better TPE together.

Editor's Notes

Scott Fulton

This is my last entry as editor of The Prairie Promoter. I'll certainly miss it; it's through my work as editor that I formed such respect and appreciation for the many layers of TPE and its chapters. But now, I want and need to focus my attention on the tasks of being TPE's President.

I'm delighted to report long-time TPE member Debra Noell has volunteered to assume the editor role in 2017. Debra worked as a professional journalist for many years. Help me to thank and welcome Debra to her new role and look for her name in this spot next newsletter.

Here's a little bit about our new editor. Debra has a bachelor's degree in journalism from the University of Missouri-Columbia. For 9 years, she worked at newspapers, covering everything from the police to courts, education to feature stories. Her last journalism job was with the Fort Wayne (IN) Journal Gazette as a staff writer.

In 1997, Debra earned a Master of Social Work degree from Indiana University-Indianapolis, and she now works as a social worker for a Madison hospital. She's been married 23 years to David Cordray, who owns a prairie restoration business called Environmental Returns. They are restoring 100 acres of prairie and oak savanna at their home on the edge of the Driftless Region.

In 2011, the couple won the John Nolan Award for Excellence in Ecological Restoration Practices, a Leopold Restoration Award presented by the Friends of the (UW) Arboretum.

We can't wait to see her "journalist's touch" on The Prairie Promoter. You can reach her at *promoter@theprairieenthusiasts.org*

An Artist's Eye

Tom Mitchell

When Jerry Newman comes to a work day with the Prairie Bluff Chapter, he comes armed. He brings cameras – three to be precise – each with a different lens: a macro for close-ups, a telephoto for distant shots, and a zoom for everything in between. He also brings an artist's eye for the unusual, aesthetically pleasing, or just photogenic.

One fine fall day during a Natural Resources Foundation field trip to Muralt Bluff recently, he composed an image of seed collectors under a blue sky that could have been titled Serenity Now. Another time while we were collecting needle grass, Jerry saw the contrast between the vertical spikes and background horizon of lead plant with tickseed as photo-worthy.

"My favorite photos are the ones that are not intended, not supposed to happen," he says. "For example, that shot of the needle grass, I was after butterflies with a big zoom, and I thought the scene required a wide angle. But it was too good to pass up." Shortly after graduating college in 1974, Jerry bought his first camera, a 35 mm Canon fTb, and set off on an extended road trip. In the next few years, he had been in every state west of the Mississippi River, shooting slides (remember Kodachrome?) that he still holds dear for the memories they preserve.

Jerry and Patricia were married in 1977, and his focus changed to making a living and raising kids. "Most of my photography during this period were point-and-shoot family snapshots," he recalls, "and then in 2009, I bought my first real digital camera."

These days, he eschews changing lenses by carrying multiple cameras, each with a specific lens.

"I always carry a camera with me, usually more than one so I don't have to change lenses. I like to capture the beauty of nature, and I have been known to wander the back roads looking for the old, odd or unusual ... abandoned farm houses, junked cars, crooked windmills."

"Photographers speak of the 'golden hour" at sunrise and sunset as the best times of the day for photography because of the low angled light," Jerry added. "But really, anytime you have a camera in your hand is the right time."

While Pat is somewhat camera-shy, Jerry's grandkids are often at the other side of his lens. "But I only have so much wall space allowed to me by my wife," he jokes. Jerry recently attended his grandson's graduation from kindergarten. "I am so used to shooting stills, that I missed an opportunity to switch to the camera's movie mode for an adorable little song that they did." His grandson, by the way, announced to the class that when he grows up, he wants to be a cowboy.

When he returns home from the field, Jerry loads his shots on his computer. He prefers Lightroom over Photoshop. For HDR, he uses Photomatrix Pro, and for basic touch ups and organizing, Photoscape. The results are often amazing.

"I would suggest that beginners spend as much time learning to process their photos as they spend learning photographic techniques," Jerry said. "I have been able to turn what I first thought to be lackluster shots into keepers with the proper software applications."

Jerry's path to prairie restoration was neither simple nor direct. "It started with an interest in history and what the landscape looked like before settlement," he said. But it wasn't until he retired that he had the time to explore these interests. "I live in the country, and while walking my dog, I noticed the diversity of plants along the roadsides. I would marvel at the beauty of the flora, but I wondered what I was looking at; so I bought a guidebook. This led to a mental exercise of learning not only the common names of the plants, but the scientific names as well. And, oh, did I mention that I like to take pictures of what I see?"

Jerry's skills have been useful to other members of the Monday work crew. When we struggle to identify a small distant butterfly, Jerry finds it with his telephoto lens, then blows up the image on his computer, compares it to a butterfly website, and lets us know that what we thought might be an eastern tailed blue was instead a gray hairstreak.

His shot of a milkweed tiger moth caterpillar could be used as an illustration in a field guide to insects. Some of his best pictures are posted on his Flickr pages (https://www.flickr.com/photos/dudeflickr/), where he has albums for all of the sites where he works with our field crews.

Jerry still likes to travel, and his most recent road trip was to Memphis for a "Blues, Brews & BBQ" adventure. "I got a shot of the iconic B.B. King Blues Club lit up at night, and of course we took some back roads on the way home." Next on Jerry and Pat's list of travel plans is the Smoky Mountains. And he still brings his cameras to our Monday workdays.

All photos, of course, by Jerry Newman

The Future of Conservation Looks Bright!

Deb Kelly

While walking my dogs a few weeks ago, I ran into my neighbors, Amy and Richard Virtue, and we stopped to talk. They have a teenage son, Dave, and the conversation turned to him. Amy asked if I had heard of "a guy named Ed (Strenski)" and went on to tell me how he and his organization, the Northwest Illinois Prairie Enthusiasts (NIPE) were changing Dave's life.

Amy said Dave's connection to NIPE came through fellow River Ridge student, Noah Haskin. Noah, as some of you know, joined the world of conservation via the Jo Daviess Conservation Foundation's former Board Chair, the late Cliff Peterson, as a member of our Land Preservation Committee. Interested to learn more, I spoke to Dave over the Labor Day weekend.

"I knew Noah from school and he encouraged me to pursue working for Ed and NIPE. I needed a job, and it sounded better than working in food service," Dave said. "I was hired and began work in March. It was all new to me and changed with the seasons. I started out manning fire breaks for burns at Gateway Park, in the Galena Territory, and at Lone Tree Farm."

On the third day, Dave added, he watched Ed cut down a burning tree. This made quite an impression because Dave mentioned it several times during our conversation. "Next, we began pulling invasive weeds, such as parsnip and sweet clover, out of prairies. My favorite part of the job is seed-picking because it's social, and we get to talk a lot. I don't really have a least favorite part of the job."

I asked about Ed's bees and if Dave has worked with them. "Not yet, but as part of a 30-day challenge for school, where you have to push yourself out of your comfort zone, I will help with the bees. I also have to learn to use a chain saw to help with tree removal at different sites this winter. Now that Noah has gone on to college, it's my turn to find someone from school to work for NIPE. Noah found me so I know I can find someone too! I had planned on going to veterinary school but this job has changed my perspective, given me ideas for new opportunities. I can help with the farm now - I know what needs to be fixed and how to fix it when I look at the land. Ed has helped me get through a lot of my problems and build my confidence. I plan on working for him and NIPE as long as I can."

I went home that afternoon thinking about the circle of life and legacies, knowing that somewhere, Cliff is smiling.

This article originally appeared in Land Matters, *a publication of The Jo Daviess Conservation Foundation. Reprinted with permission. Photo by Deb Kelly.*

Insect Overwintering

Marci Hess and MJ Hatfield

[Editor's Note: The online version of this article at www.The-PrairieEnthusiasts.org contains live links to pages on the Bug-Guide website for further details and photos of each insect.]

As winter nears, I look forward to my "long winter's nap," where I catch up on reading, writing, various research projects, and processing photography. It's generally a bit slower pace of life, and I am ready for it as the days grow shorter and chillier. Insects, in their own way, do the same.

For many insects, their "long winter's nap" is called diapause, a period of suspended development. This is the most common overwintering mode (Leather et al. 1993). Diapause is marked by a time of preparation, followed by a time when the insect does not feed. The end of diapause comes slowly and includes particular environmental events. One is the return of a certain photoperiod (length of daylight). In the course of an insect's life, it typically enters diapause in the cooler months as it progresses from egg to adult. The insect life form that overwinters (egg, larva, pupa, or adult) varies with the species.

How do insects know winter is coming?

While diapause is genetically controlled, there are environmental factors stimulating the beginning and ending of this time period. Three important environmental cues are photoperiod, temperature and nutritional needs. Photoperiod is the more reliable cue and is defined as the insects' response to day-length, which usually corresponds with temperature change. Insects also get cues from their food plants; the senescence (aging and deterioration) of their nutritional sources signals impending harsh conditions. Diapause is also synchronized so emergence occurs when chances of finding a mate are high.

Isn't nature incredible?

How do they tolerate cold northern winters?

Insects have different strategies for cold hardiness, which allow them to survive, for some, at very low temperatures. While some can tolerate freezing, most insects in our climate use the biochemical strategy of supercooling, or freeze avoidance, and many of them overwinter in an immobile state such as larvae or pupae (Leather et al. 1992). Supercooling is when water cools below the freezing point but because of other properties, it doesn't freeze. This process is initiated in the fall. The insect stops feeding and clears the digestive system. This removes water and naturally increases solubles. Next, an increase in polyols (an alcohol) and sugars occur (glycerol is the most common sugar) and acts like antifreeze. Collectively, these are known as cryoprotectants. Overwintering larvae can supercool to temps ranging from -68F to -86F!

The Goldenrod gall fly (*Eurosta solidaginis*) produces three cryoprotectants with the highest concentrations being polyols (Baust and Lee 1981). The flies spend 11 months inside a gall (abnormal outgrowth of plant tissue) as a larva.

L - Goldenrod gall fly larva (Eurosta solidaginis) *nestled into a gall on a Canada goldenrod* (Solidago canadensis). *R- Close up of a Goldenrod gall fly larva. Photos by Marci Hess*
http://bugguide.net/node/view/10482

The fire-colored beetle (*Dendroides canadensis*) http://bugguide.net/node/view/45131 has the ability to switch from freeze tolerant to intolerant, depending on the weather conditions of that particular year. The fire-colored beetle was the first insect discovered to have this ability (Horwath and Duman 1984). The red bark beetle (*Cucujus clavipes*) http://bugguide.net/node/view/7531) is also known to use both strategies.

Fire-colored beetle (Dendroides canadensis) *larva (L) and adult (R). Photos by Ilona Loser*

What is their life cycle stage?

Whether insects overwinter as eggs, nymphs, larvae, or pupae is important to their survival strategy. They must control their development and reproduction in order to optimize their survival throughout the cold winters.

The recurring theme of ecological specificity applies to insect overwintering as well. The stage used by the insect is dependent upon its taxon and life cycle. It's unfortunate we don't know more about the overwintering strategies of many of our known insects. I suppose this is expected because only 20% of insects are described, and an even lower percentage of these have full known biologies.

Eggs are the most cold-hardy, but they are not impervious to the rigors of our Wisconsin winters. European praying mantis (*Mantis religiosa*), http://bugguide.net/node/view/22947 for example, overwinter as eggs. But in a 6-year study, their mortality ranged from 15-86% depending on the temperature fluctuations (Salt and James 1947).

Moths and butterflies tend to overwinter in a particular stage, depending on the family taxa. While one can find over-

*Check out the BugGuide website to see egg cases and emerging nymphs of the European Praying mantis (*Mantis religiosa*). Photo by Marci Hess*

wintering forms in eggs, larvae, pupae and adults, in moths 55% are pupae, and in butterflies 56% are pupae (Leather et al. 1993).

Overwintering adults can be found alone or in aggregations with other insects. Think of those pesky Boxelder bugs and Asian beetles that swarm our homes as the thermometer dips! Others you'll find overwintering as adults are Snow fleas (*Hypogastrura nivicola*) http://bugguide.net/node/view/93782 and Winter crane flies (*Trichocera sp*) http://bugguide.net/node/view/31296. On a sunny, warm winter day, these can be found on top of the snow. Be sure to take your camera and post your photos on the TPE Facebook page!

Most aquatic insects overwinter as larvae or nymphs under the ice. They continue feeding and growing until spring comes and they're ready to emerge. The Common Green Darner (*Anax junius*) http://bugguide.net/node/view/585 takes two summers at the larval stage before emerging as an adult. These larvae are aquatic.

*Common Green Darner dragonfly (*Anax junius*) Photo by Marci Hess*

And, of course, there are always exceptions! Some insects require two or more years to reach maturity. One example is the chaffer beetle in the *Osmoderma* genus; they spend three years in the larval stage in rotting wood before pupating in fall and emerging the following year. A sidebar fact - there are only three beetles of this genus living in the U.S. (Galloway, MLBS website)

*Chafer beetle (*Osmoderma eremicola*) larva (L, photo by Ilona Loser) and adult (R, photo by Marci Hess) http://bugguide.net/node/view/9891*

The forked fungus beetle (*Bolitotherus cornutus*) can overwinter as an adult or a larva depending on whether it "hatched" in spring or fall. The larva overwinter in their host fungus, but we don't know where the adults overwinter. Perhaps in the dead or dying tree where the fungus is growing? Maybe in the soil near the roots of the tree? Maybe in the fungus?

*Forked fungus beetle (*Bolitotherus cornutus*) larva (L, photo by M.J. Hatfield) and adult (R, photo by Marci Hess) - http://bugguide.net/node/view/7187*

The Virginia Ctenucha moth (*Ctenucha virginica*) http://bugguide.net/node/view/7773 overwinters as a caterpillar (larva) in the leaf litter of grasses, sedges and iris. It produces two generations in one year, so the caterpillar can be found in the dark stage for the cooler months and in the light stage for the warmer months. BugGuide page has great photos of the differing caterpillar colors. Check out your prairie and see if you can find this one!

Not only do insects have to change their chemistry (supercooling) and know the most strategic life cycle stage in order to survive, they also need to add coloration to their winter survival "to do" list. Darker colors not only hide them from predators, they also absorb heat. Most of the insects overwintering as eggs are black. Some pupae of the Geometridae family of moths start out green and darken as they overwinter in the soil. Eastern tent caterpillar moths (*Malacosoma americana*) http://bugguide.net/node/view/558 lay their eggs in masses on tree limbs. They are white when laid, then turn dark and blend into the tree limb.

Where do they overwinter?

While we know very little about most insect overwintering habits, we can generally say some of the places they overwinter include in the soil, under leaf litter, dead plants or grasses, inside crevices of tree bark or plant stems, inside tree stumps, galls, old rodent burrows, and under just about anything. Bumblebees like to choose overwintering spots under another object; it could be a rock, a fallen tree, a deck, or a porch.

Soil and snow are also good insulators. Many moths and butterflies overwinter as pupae at the soil surface. Moths such as Spotted cutworm (*Xestia c-nigrum*) overwinter at the soil surface, and they endure much lower temperatures than insects such as the Japanese beetle (*Popillia japonica*) whose larvae can burrow 4-8" into the soil.

Insects using the soil surface, under leaf litter and dead plants have the added benefit of the snow's insulating effects. But this places them at greater risk of mortality with early spring management practices.

*L - This egg mass of the Eastern tent caterpillar moth (*Malacosoma americana*) turns dark to blend into the bark and capture solar heat in the winter months.*
R - Eastern tent caterpillar moth Photos by Marci Hess

How do they choose an overwintering site?

Topography plays a key role in many aspects of ecology. For insects, it can create micro-locales that benefit them. What might appear to be similar habitat can result in quite different weather patterns. These micro-climates affect how insects exploit overwintering habitats.

Like all aspects of life strategies and survival, there are costs associated with overwintering. The immobility predisposes them to unpredictable events and predation. Desiccation (drying out) and precise timing of emergence pose threats, too, depending on the weather. For example, the Codling moth (*Cydia pomonella*) http://bugguide.net/node/view/67544 has an 80% mortality rate in a typical winter. (Leather et al. 1993)

How do insects know when it's time to emerge after overwintering?

Photoperiods and temperature are again the most important cues. Synchronizing this is important. Being out of harmony with the environment and the growth of their food plants or hosts (if one is a parasitoid) can be disastrous.

There are so many unknowns when learning about insects. This lack of knowledge can be an opportunity. Whether you are one who gets out into nature during the cold, snowy, winter months or you prefer to stay warm inside, you can contribute. While snowshoeing, look up and around and see if you can spot an egg mass or a gall housing a larva. Insects are more cryptic and harder to find in their overwintering mode. Take a picture and post it on TPE Facebook page with the date and locale. If you prefer staying inside during winter months, pick out an insect or two, dig through the literature and note your findings. However you choose to do the research, you can be certain that your contributions are important!

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mercantile product of "Pure Live Seed (PLS)."
Ron's knowledge of plants, and their preferred habitats, enable him to collect the diverse range of seeds critical to prairie restoration, be it wet, mesic or dry habitats.

Ron then gives the finished seed product, worth thousands of dollars on the commercial market, to organizations and individuals who, for various reasons, cannot procure the type of selections appropriate for their needs. He assists with new plantings or gives unique plant seeds for interseeding at established locations. He does this all on his own time and at his own expense.

Similarly, Zach Kastern gives his time, energy and enthusiasm to ecological restoration, said Alice Mirk. The State Natural Areas (SNA) Volunteer Program of the DNR honored Zach for his commitment to the Southern Kettle Moraine State National Areas. Qualifications for the award include:

- *Impacting the ecological health of an SNA*
- *Encouraging others to join in and inspiring them in the process*
- *Educating themselves and others*
- *Forming outstanding working relationships with SNA managers*
- *Achieving goals set in management meetings*
- *Possessing exceptional knowledge of an SNA*

Zach's leadership and enthusiasm extends to the Glacial Prairie Chapter of TPE. Not only was he quick to volunteer as monitor and manager of the Adelman-Schwartz Preserve acquired by TPE in December 2015, but he also leads the GPC stewardship efforts at the Southern Kettle Moraine SNA.

Zach devotes most Saturdays guiding and motivating GPC work parties, and on the rare occasions he's absent, he's sorely missed!

We are proud and impressed that TPE has such fine volunteers, and it's an honor to have them given the recognition they deserve. Way to go Ron & Zach!!!!

Kathryn J. (McDonald) Cartwright

Debra Noell

Kathryn J. "Kathy" Cartwright, a founding member of what grew into the Empire-Sauk Chapter of TPE, died Aug. 12, 2016, from frontotemporal dementia. She was 64.

Born Nov. 6, 1951, in Chicago, to Frank and Patricia (Jacques) Cartwright, Kathy earned a bachelor's degree in biology from the University of Northern Illinois in 1976. She went on to earn a master's degree in Environmental Engineering in 1980.

When Kathy moved to Madison, she worked for the WI Department of Natural Resources and later pursued additional studies at the University of Wisconsin. She also taught and worked at the UW Arboretum. Her career included work with several area environmental engineering firms and for 10 years she worked with the Wisconsin Community Action Program.

Kathy was a Master Gardener and freely shared her deep knowledge of plants and skills in gardening. She helped start the Community Gardening program in Cottage Grove, and volunteered considerable time with The Prairie Enthusiasts restoring native prairie areas.

In 1991, Kathy helped found TPE's Prairie Oak Chapter, which eventually became the Empire-Sauk Chapter. She served 3 years (1991-1993) as chapter Secretary and as chair of the chapter newsletter committee. She stayed active on the chapter leadership team and helped coordinate numerous educational and outreach projects.

Her TPE work included creating a part-time volunteer coordinator position for the chapter in 2010. Kathy took the lead, developed job announcements, reviewed applications, set up interviews, and eventually helped hire the first chapter volunteer coordinator, Ann Calhoun.

"Kathy was an amazing lady," Ann recalls, "especially generous with her time helping the Empire-Sauk chapter advance volunteer coordination efforts. I'll never forget her helping me haul the display around and joining me at volunteer recruitment events … She was such a kind, knowledgeable and approachable ambassador for the important work TPE carries out. Such a great lady with an unmistakable voice."

Kathy remained active with TPE until her health issues arose in 2012. Her mother, Patricia, also died too young from the same frontotemporal dementia that claimed Kathy. She is survived by her husband, Joseph McDonald; a brother, Frank Jr.; and several nieces and nephews. There was a memorial service for Kathy on Oct. 9 in the auditorium of the UW Arboretum.

David Middleton

Evanne Hunt

Long-time member of the St. Croix Valley Chapter Dave Middleton died on October 5. He rarely missed a burn, work day or a field trip unless he was on a birding trip. Dave was funny, smart and always generous with his knowledge and experience.

Dave's passion for nature was evident in the prairie he and LaVonne planted at their home. They enjoyed sharing its progress with the chapter on several field trips, which always took way longer than planned because Dave had a story about each plant.

Every work day or field trip was more fun when Dave came. He will be greatly missed.

Empire-Sauk

Class Visit to Schurch-Thomson Prairie

Scott Fulton

An energetic group of around 50 2nd and 3rd graders from Highland, WI took a field trip to Schurch-Thomson Prairie on October 4. The trip was organized by Kim Wahl, the Green Schools Wisconsin field trip coordinator. Rich Henderson gave the kids a tour and instruction on seeds, after which they had a great time out in the prairie collecting. The chapter's seed program coordinator, Grace Vosen, then showed the students how the seeds are processed. Chapter member and retired teacher Rachel Potter helped keep things "under control." It looks like a wonderful time was had by all!

Photos by Rachel Potter

Field Trip Reports

Rich Henderson

On the morning of July 30, TPE hosted a well-attended field trip at its Kalscheur Oak Savanna. This preserve is located a few miles south of Hollandale in SE Iowa County, WI. Nine enthusiastic people joined Kristin Westad and me in exploring the site. It turned out to be a most rewarding outing.

The weather was perfect for hearing and seeing wildlife, not too hot or too windy. In addition, there were many species of plants in bloom, a nice result from last spring's burns. We encountered a constant barrage of butterflies - at least 17 species and nearly all in very good numbers. The most spectacular find was fresh raccoon scat covered by five or six species all at once. The butterflies were so intent in getting moisture and nutrients that they ignored our presence and each other.

Kalscheur Oak Savanna. Photo by Kristin Westad

Thanks to the keen eyes of the participants, we found 11 new plant species for the site, including a slender ladies'-tresses orchid (*Spiranthes lacera*) in flower. This brings the total number of plants reported for the site to 243 native species. We also heard or saw approximately 20 species of birds that use oak savanna, including indigo buntings, rufous-sided towhees, bluebirds and field sparrows.

On the afternoon of Aug. 21, TPE hosted a field trip at its Schurch-Thomson Prairie (190 acres), which is located five miles south of Blue Mounds in SE Iowa County. Seven people joined me on a perfect day to be outside walking through remnants of original prairie and various restorations. Even though it was late in the summer, we were treated to the persistent call of the endangered Henslow's sparrow and repeated flushing of meadowlarks.

There were many late summer wildflowers in bloom, including the white-topped upland boneset, striking yellow patches of prairie - or showy - sunflower, gorgeous purple spears of rough blazingstar, and dazzling drifts of cream gentian! We were also fortunate enough to flush at least five endangered regal fritillary butterflies.

On close inspection of plants, we found a number of other interesting insects, including the uncommon yellow bumblebee (*Bombus fervidus*) and caterpillars of the leadplant flower-moth (*Schinia lucens*), a leadplant specialist that only eats leadplant flowers and seeds and is of Special Concern in WI. We also saw shiny, metallic dogbane leaf beetles on - what else - its host plant, dogbane. And we observed colorful caterpillars of the primrose flower-moth (*Schinia florida*) on inflorescences of gaura. This moth feeds only on evening primrose and gaura plants.

Helping on TPE work parties often comes with rewards beyond the satisfaction of doing something positive to maintain our preserves and managed sites. On July 9th, volunteers sweeping through the prairie remnants and restorations of Schurch-Thomson Prairie, looking for the occasional parsnip or sweetclover, were serenaded by meadowlarks, dickcissels, field sparrows, and endangered Henslow's sparrows. They were also entertained by the constant activity of butterflies such as wood nymphs, great spangled and aphrodite fritillaries, and a large number of freshly emerged black swallowtails. But the highlight was seeing a mating pair of the endangered regal fritillary butterfly.

Mating regal fritillaries (Speyeria idalia). Photo by Rich Kahl

Wisconsin Master Naturalist Class

Scott Fulton

In August and September, the chapter sponsored a very successful training course under the Wisconsin Master Naturalist Program. Fifteen students (including yours truly) completed the intensive multi-week training at the barn of the Schurch-Thomson Prairie preserve.

Photo by Karen Agee

The course, led by volunteer chapter members Pat Trochlell and Rachel Potter, included seven all-day sessions, covering topics such as geology and hydrology, soils, plants, birds and insects of the prairie ecosystem, as well as notable figures in Wisconsin conservation history. Training included lectures, walks and demonstrations given by a wonderful range of guest experts. The program was field-intensive, and included a trip to Avoca and Spring Green prairies. Each student also had to complete and present a capstone project to complete his or her certification process.

The Wisconsin Master Naturalist Program is designed to train highly motivated volunteers to work in conservation around the state in stewardship, education and citizen science. Graduates of the program are required to complete at least 40 hours of volunteer conservation work, and eight hours of advanced training each year to attain and maintain their certifications. Based on the interest and projects from this class, the program has been a great success and well worth the effort required. A repeat program is being planned for this spring.

Those of us who attended the class wish to express our gratitude to Pat and Rachel for their extraordinary effort and skill in planning and teaching this wonderful course. And a special thanks to Karen Agee for doing the behind-the-scenes work needed to make it all happen.

Glacial Prairie

Alice Mirk

Frank Elementary School, Kenosha

Second graders can be a tough audience.

On Sept. 12, Walter and I traveled to Kenosha to dazzle three 2nd grade classes at Frank Elementary School. We prepared a slide show tailored to the age group, and gathered dried leaves from prairie dock and compass plants we just knew would impress.

But knowing kids, we also brought other treasures - a bison's skull and lower jaw (from Greg Kummrow, owner of Battle Creek Grass-Fed Beef and Bison near Oconomowoc), a bag full of pelts, a coyote skull and other items from Liz Herzmann, Wildlife Conservation Educator at the Horicon Marsh. The badger, coyote and fox pelts were particularly popular, but the hit of the day were two pair of faceted glasses in Liz's kit, which when worn by the kids, enabled them to look at the world through the compound eyes of insects.

Each class learned about the history of tall grass prairies and the constituent elements of prairie soils, flora and fauna, and how they relate and interact. We were gratified when the students asked intelligent, thoughtful questions and wanted to learn as much as possible. This was our fourth visit to the school in less than two years. We value our relationship with the school, its teachers and students, and look forward to our next visit.

If you build it, they will come

Glacial Prairie Chapter volunteers worked on and monitored the Mayville Middle School prairie (MMS) for problematic invasive species this summer, especially Canada thistles. Two visits were focused on spot application of herbicide to individual thistles. After two growing seasons, the prairie is virtually thistle free! During these visits, it became apparent that local volunteers had succeeded in keeping most of the seedlings alive by watering them during periods of dry, hot weather early in the summer.

The prairie looked - and smelled - great. In fact, one little "prairie rose" named Whitney (*Rosa whitney var. persha*) sprung up on the edge of the prairie, enhancing the beauty of the scene! It does appear that "if you build it, they will come!" (See photo.)

You may recall an earlier article about planting the Mayville School Prairie for butterfly habitat in conjunction with the Federal Fish and Wildlife Service. Last year's 5th grade students began the 6th grade by participating in monarch butterfly tagging on the school prairie with the DNR Wildlife Conservation Educator Liz Herzmann. The students really enjoyed getting out on the prairie, tagging monarchs and spotting butterflies of all kinds. It was a wonderful educational opportunity for them.

Contributed photo of Whitney

Minnesota Driftless

George Howe

Prairie enthusiasts took advantage of a gorgeous fall in the Minnesota Driftless region. The Chapter organized a public hike Oct. 1 to introduce folks to the beautiful Dietmaier prairie and farm, where George Howe has been leading restoration efforts for two years.

The results were obvious and encouraging; native plants like little bluestem, mountain mint, and wild bergamot popped up nearly everywhere in the pasture/grassland, and a three-acre ridge-top remnant displayed fabulous beauty and diversity.

People enjoyed a long but slow hike out across the ridge, identifying numerous native prairie plants, moths, and snakes along the way. Sky-blue aster, Indian grass, and showy goldenrod were most prominent and stole the show.

At the end of the hike, folks were treated to a breathtaking view of the Mississippi River Valley, and George explained how he had worked to protect most of the valley with conservation easements.

After the hike, the group feasted on local apples and refreshments back at the farmstead. Folks also had fun viewing Nick Dietmaier's large and elaborate garden containing a massive variety of pumpkins and gourds, including dozens of bright orange giant pumpkins just begging to be jack-o-lanterns. It was a perfect fall day.

Dietmaier Prairie. Photo by George Howe

Northwest Illinois

For chapter news visit our website www.nipes.org.

Prairie Bluff

Tom Mitchell

The chapter again participated in Youth Conservation Days with Green County 5th graders. Held in the spring and fall at Honey Creek Park in Monroe, our members join with other conservation groups to explain prairies, streams, soils, fish, forests, watersheds, wildlife management and native artifacts. In early October, the students helped us collect tall grass seed at Barry Prairie.

We're happy to announce our "Parsnip Predators" may now be purchased at the University of Wisconsin Arboretum's visitor's center bookstore. This tool, used to remove unwanted weeds, was designed 20 years ago by Rob Baller and Nick Faessler and is produced now by chapter volunteers, managed by Jim Freymiller.

Volunteers from Prairie Bluff Chapter have been busy collecting seed for three fall seeding projects - Vale Prairie, Iltis Savanna and Stauffacher Prairie. Members Heidi Hankley and Jim MacDonald have led the efforts to plant prairie in former agricultural fields at the Stauffacher unit, a state natural area owned by the Department of Natural Resources. Heidi and Jim also led Natural Resources Foundation field trips to York Prairie.

We salute Rich Henderson of Empire Sauk Chapter, who was one of five featured speakers at the 24th North American Prairie Conference, held in July at Illinois State University at Normal, IL. Honored at the conference was Pete Schramm, who organized the first conference in 1968 at Knox College in Galesburg, IL.

We send our thanks and appreciation to William Kuenzi, Dan Gartzke and Dave Green for their leadership in the Green's Prairie Cemetery Association. Current projects at the tallgrass pioneer cemetery include the restoration of fallen and broken headstones, the removal of non-native day lilies, and the feasibility of a permanent historical marker.

Prairie Sands

Ray Goehring

On Oct. 1, seven members of Prairie Sands Chapter (some traveling from as far away as Waupaca and Madison) came to help WDNR staff and volunteers collect seed from Marquette County's Page Creek Marsh Natural Area. The seed will be placed later this winter at the new savanna restoration at Observatory Hill, also in Marquette County.

L – R: Sophie Justinak. Amanda Rausch, Jon Robaidek—WDNR Observatory Hill Steward, Andrey Schuettpelz, Jill Schuettpelz, Bill Frank, Cathy Frank, Josh Korow, Ray Goehring, Steve Bohachek, Maurice Plummer. Not pictured: Jared Urban, Charlie Church. Photo by Jared Urban

There was a fall work party at Page Creek Marsh Natural Area on Oct. 18 to continue the work we started last year to remove invasive honeysuckle. Once again, chapter members worked side by side with Quercus Land Management Services who were contracted by property owners, The Nature Conservancy.

This adds to the work completed this summer by a team of sawyers. The use of a skid steer and forestry mower cleared firebreaks in preparation for a 2017 prescribed burn. Laurel Bennett, chapter steward for Page Creek said: "It was amazing what that combination can do. You can really see progress."

And, in yet another step forward for Page Creek, The Nature Conservancy invested in a new sign, which Laurel and fellow chapter member, David Hamel, installed at the public parking lot off of County Road K.

Oct. 4, volunteer steward Laurel Bennett and helper David Hamel erected this new sign at Page Creek natural area in Marquette County. Page Creek is owned by The Nature Conservatory. Prairie Sands Chapter helps TNC with stewardship work. Photo by Laurel Bennett

In September, David Hamel worked with Muirland Bird Club president Daryl Christiansen and teachers and students from High Marq Environmental School, to identify and remove invasive trees and shrubs from Carol Island in Buffalo Lake near Montello. The students intend to establish a bird sanctuary on the island where Green Heron have been spotted.

The chapter is planning its annual Christmas party and seed exchange at 6 p.m., Dec. 1 at the home of Charlie and Barb Church. Directions and RSVP information will be emailed later. If you haven't been getting Prairie Sands chapter notices and would like to, contact Ray Goehring at *raygoe@yahoo.com*.

St. Croix Valley

Evanne Hunt

UW-River Falls students collect seed

Dr. Eric Sanden requires his prairie restoration class to get hands-on experience. Each Friday in September and October, the students spent an hour collecting seed at Foster Cemetery, Alexander Oak Savanna and Blueberry Hill. The seed will be cleaned by Mike Miller at his seed nursery and then redistributed in areas we clear this winter. Awesome work students!

Photo by Mike Miller

Southwood Nature Preserve hosts prairie day event

On September 18, the chapter staffed a booth at a prairie day arranged by North St. Paul, MN and organized by local master naturalists. While chapter member Buck Malick answered prairie questions, members Joe Beattie and Mike Perry directed the bison-chip-throwing contest.

Photos by Evanne Hunt

The kids, unfamiliar with the term "bison chips," screamed and ran away when Joe explained what they were, only to return a few minutes later to try to beat the record toss.

Winter Work Days Scheduled

Watch for email confirmation and check the webpage for changes. All work days start at 10 am.

November 5 - Foster Conservation Area

November 19 - Foster Conservation Area

December 2 - Alexander Oak Savanna

December 17- Solstice celebration at Foster Conservation Area

December 31- New Year's Eve party at Alexander Oak Savanna

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

The following people have joined TPE between June 29 and October 18, 2016.

Lynette Anderson (St. Croix Beach, MN)
Todd Anderson (Palm Beach, FL) In Honor of Vance Baker
John Arndt & Barbara Wiesen (Elizabeth, IL)
Benjamin Arnold (Mequon, WI)
Gary & Barbara Bernard (Scales Mound, IL)
Dan Caucutt (Madison, WI)
Minnesota State University - Mankato (Mankato, MN)
Polly Cisco (Richland Center, WI)
Fred & Kate Dike (Madison, WI)
Joel Eigner (Fall Creek, WI)
Robert Fisher (LaCrosse, WI)
Albert Friedman (Madison, WI)
Rebecca Herb (Madison, WI)
Kurt Peters & Elizabeth Hopp-Peters (Argyle, WI)
Robert Kaleta Jr (Milwaukee, WI)
Randall Knight (Atascadero, CA)
John & Carrie Mathews (Oregon, WI)
Harvey B Muller (Cassville, WI)
Zoe Pearce (Galesburg, IL) Gift Membership from Northwest Illinois Prairie Enthusiasts
Chuck Phillipson (New Glarus, WI)
Matthew Reetz (Madison, WI)
Ruth Risler (Strum, WI) Gift Membership from Jane Edson
Gary & Jean Ruhser (Holmen, WI)
Maria Sadowski (Madison, WI)
Dick Seebach (River Falls, WI)
Brett Teela (Black Earth, WI)
David Virtue (Hanover, IL) Gift Membership from Northwest Illinois Prairie Enthusiasts
Jerry & Louise Weare (Wauwatosa, WI)
Matt Wysocki (Knapp, WI)
Tom Zagar (Muskego, WI)

THANK YOU DONORS

We thank the following who donated to TPE between June 29 and October 18, 2016.
These gifts include those from our annual appeal, are beyond membership dues and are truly generous and appreciated.

$1000 or more

Anonymous
Jennell Ballering
Thornburg Foundation *(To TPE and MN Driftless Chapter)*
Gary & Pam Gates
Evanne Hunt
Anonymous *(To TPE Mounds View Trust)*
Roma Lenehan *(In Honor of Thomas & Kathy Brock)*
Mark Martin & Sue Foote-Martin *(For Hauser Road Prairie Fund)*
Mike Miller & Susan Goode
Doug Steege & Kris Euclide *(For West Dane Conservancy)*

$500 - $999

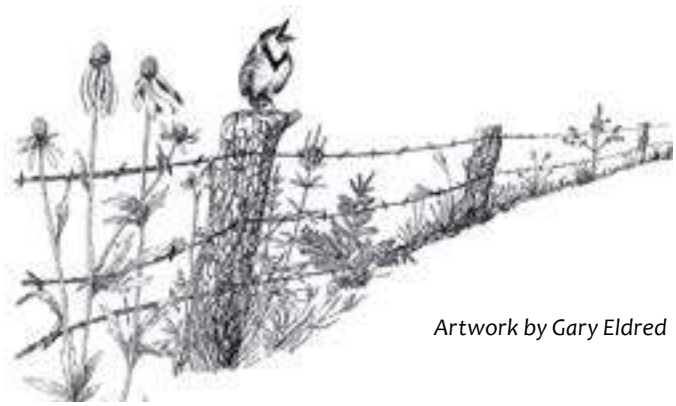
Nick & Linda Faessler
Paul Kaarakka & Andrea Gargas *(For Hauser Road Prairie Fund)*
Jim & Diane Rogala

$100 - $499

David and Kathy Adam
George and Ann Brandt *(In Memory of William (Bill) Brandt)*
Dave and Glenda Buholzer *(To Prairie Bluff Chapter)*
Dale & Linda Dahlke *(To Chippewa Savannas Chapter for prescribed burn)*
Gary Eldred
Evanne Hunt *(In Memory of Dave Middleton)*
Jan Ketelle (To Empire Sauk Chapter)
Debbie Konkel *(For Hauser Road Prairie Fund)*
David Kostka *(To Prairie Bluff Chapter for prescribed burn)*
Kimberly Kreitinger & Eric Preston
Jack Kussmaul *(In Honor of Gary Eldred)*
Kevin Magee *(In Memory of Susan Connell-Magee)*
Mark Maidak *(To Northwest Illinois Prairie Enthusiasts)*
Gordon Powell *(In Memory of Richard Pedersen)*
Citizens Natural Resource
John and Evelyn Stiff *(To Olive Thomson Student Intern Endowment Fund)*
Kathleen Sulzer *(To Prairie Bluff Chapter)*
Sandy Tauferner & Myron Mortell
George Vernon *(To Prairie Bluff Chapter)*
Charles & Chris Wellington *(To Prairie Bluff Chapter)*

Under $100

Betsy Beck *(For Hauser Road Prairie Fund)*
Lafayette County Bluebird Society Inc
Caroljean Coventree
Don Entenman *(For Hauser Road Prairie Fund)*
Steven Kahl *(For Hauser Road Prairie Fund)*
Laura Kearney *(In Honor of Tom Brock)*
Lois & Hirochicka Komai *(For Hauser Road Prairie Fund)*
Donald Mason & Crystal Boden-Mason *(To Northwestern Illinois Prairie Enthusiasts)*
Nancy McGill *(For Hauser Road Prairie Fund)*
Tom & Jenny Mitchell *(To Prairie Bluff Chapter In Memory of Richard Baller)*
Jerome Pedretti
Mary Pelzer *(For Hauser Road Prairie Fund)*
Fred Retzlaff *(For Hauser Road Prairie Fund)*
Iowa County Rec & Prairie Restoration *(To Empire Sauk Chapter)*
Ralph & Ann Woldt *(To Prairie Sands Chapter)*



Artwork by Gary Eldred

Legacy Giving

Please consider The Prairie Enthusiasts in your will or estate plans. If you've already done so, please let us know, so we can personally thank you for ensuring the perpetuation & recovery of prairies and savannas. For more information please contact Chris Kirkpatrick, Executive Director at 608-638-1873 or *executivedirector@theprairieenthusiasts.org*.

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Questions? E-mail Joe Rising (Communications Coordinator) at *TPE@ThePrairieEnthusiasts.org*
or call us at 608-638-1873.

Thank you!

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The Prairie Enthusiasts Membership Levels:

- ❑ $25+ Little Bluestem
- ❑ $50+ Big Bluestem
- ❑ $100+ Shooting Star
- ❑ $250+ Blazing Star
- ❑ $500+ Monarch
- ❑ $1,000+ Compass Club

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